

## Wichita trial shaping up to be another circus

The trial of Scott Roeder, who's admitted killing abortion doctor George Tiller in Wichita, is shaping up to be the best circus trial since the year-long O.J. Simpson fiasco.

This week alone saw Roeder confessing to the murder, and proclaiming a defense tactic that doesn't exist in U.S. law; his own lawyer refuting that defense and a motion for a change of venue to move the trial out of Sedgwick County.

The confession is interesting. Roeder made it to reporters from *The Kansas City Star* and the Associated Press, not a police officer or a judge. He has a history of talking to reporters from his jail cell, having called the Associated Press just after his arrest.

A confession at this stage, well before jury selection, isn't going to help his case, especially when his attorneys put in a not-guilty plea. What it might do is help with a plea bargain down to a lesser charge, but what he said in the confession is that his killing of Tiller was justified to protect unborn infants, and that he planned to use a "necessity defense" at trial.

That leads to the second interesting development this week. Right after the confession went public, Roeder's public defender came out saying there is no necessity defense in U.S. trial law. His own lawyer, albeit one assigned to him, just shot down his defense. Talk about shooting yourself in the foot.

The third interesting thing this week was the change-of-venue motion. This motion is typically used when the lawyer believes the defendant won't receive a fair trial in the district where the crime was committed. Roeder's lawyer alleged that because of the media coverage, saying the story had been a top headline for 11 days in a row in the *Wichita Eagle*.

He has a point, but not the one he thinks he has. Sure, the media coverage was huge, but people are already biased in this case one way or the other. There will be plenty of pro-life and pro-choice advocates in the jury pool, but a lot of them, no matter what they think, will be in favor of a fair trial.

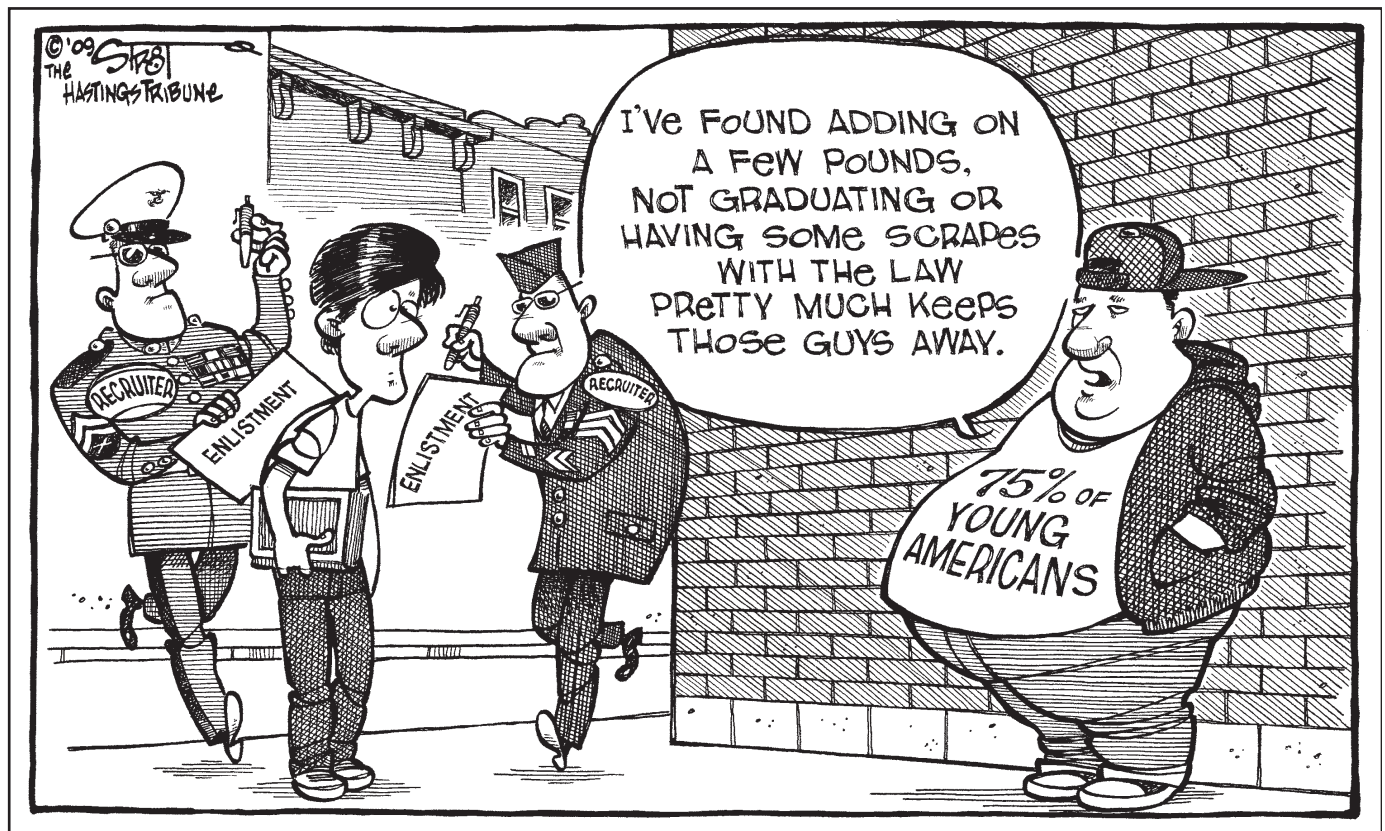
In the weeks to come, we'll see a lot more interesting things come out of this trial. We'll see the defense come up with a solid plan of action, hopefully one that's an actual defense and not something just seen on television. We'll see the prosecution try the case based on hard evidence and testimony. With the eyes of the nation watching, the last thing they want to do is screw up. And we'll see more bizarre behavior from Roeder.

Whatever each of us might think of this man's action, he clearly believes he's a saint and that no jury could possibly convict him. His lawyer isn't so confident, and if this lack of confidence comes through at trial, Roeder doesn't stand a chance no matter whether the trial is moved or not.

The outcome of all this is the focus of the trial. If Roeder succeeds in focusing the trial on the morality of abortion, he may have a chance to avoid a lot of jail time. If the trial focuses on the murder, he's going away for a long, long time.

In the end, it's all up the jury and where their opinions end up.

— Kevin Bottrell



## Honoring our veterans

Nov. 11, we observe Veterans Day to honor those who have served our country in the military and protected our way of life.

Kansans can be proud that our state has a long history of supporting our country's veterans in gratitude for their service. These stories have and will continue to inspire people of our state, and nation, to do great things for those who sacrifice on our behalf.

The Veterans Day holiday was founded by one of Kansas' own. Alvin King of Emporia proposed that Armistice Day be changed to recognize and honor veterans from all wars and conflicts, not just World War I. Kansas Congressman Ed Rees introduced a bill creating the holiday. In 1954, President Eisenhower, a native of Abilene and one of the most admired military leaders in our history, signed the legislation proclaiming Veterans Day.

In December 1943, a Topekan crafted the Servicemen's Readjustment Act — also known as the GI Bill of Rights. Harry Colmery, a lawyer and past national commander of the American Legion, wrote this first GI Bill, which forever changed

### Veterans Day

Rep. Jerry Moran



American history.

Over 60 years later, as a member of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I was honored to continue Colmery's mission by supporting a "21st Century GI Bill," providing enhanced education benefits to veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan.

More recently, in 2005, a group of American Legion Riders from Mulvane was the first to respond to hateful demonstrations taking place at U.S. service members' funerals. These members of the "Patriot Guard" shielded military families from protesters, leading to a nationwide movement that has allowed grieving families the peaceful time of mourning they deserve.

Our state's honorable tradition continues in present time. One example is retired

Army Col. Gary LaGrange of Manhattan, who created "Help us Learn... Give us Hope" ([www.helpuslearn.org](http://www.helpuslearn.org)). This organization collects and sends school supplies, including books, to U.S. service members who distribute them to Iraqi and Afghan school children.

First requested by a "Big Red One" 1st Infantry Division soldier in Baghdad in 2008, this program has grown. To date, over 260,000 pounds of educational materials have been collected from Kansans and sent overseas. Illiteracy rates as high as 90 percent among Afghan women threaten the future of these countries and our mission there. "Help us Learn... Give us Hope" is making a difference in winning hearts and minds while helping children toward a brighter future.

King, Colmery, the Patriot Guard, and LaGrange are just a few examples of many etched in our Kansas history that have shaped our country's gratitude for American veterans. May we continue to support our veterans and the thousands now serving in uniform who work each day to secure our country and our freedoms.



To...all of our veterans, and also their families. God Bless them all. (emailed)

To.... the parents who kept their kids out of the middle of the street during Wednesday's parade, and also the candy-throwers who threw their candy far enough away from their vehicle so kids (and some adults) wouldn't get run over. (emailed)

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## Off the grid

Open Season  
Cynthia Haynes



I have some friends who are thinking of moving "off the grid."

That is, they are looking for a place to live that isn't on the national system of electrical lines.

This doesn't mean their home wouldn't have electricity. It just means that they would have to provide their own using a generator, windmill, solar panels or water power. It's not really a cheaper way to live, but it is a more self-sufficient lifestyle.

When we were traveling a lot a couple of years ago, we saw quite a few ranches and farms in the Dakotas and Wyoming with no electric lines coming over the hills.

These were single farmsteads miles and miles from any neighbor, and the cost of bringing in electric lines would have been astronomical.

Back in the early 90s, we had some friends who were the managers of a guest ranch high in the mountains. They lived

off the grid.

The source of power was a water wheel. When everyone went to bed, the ranch manager would go out and turn off the wheel, shutting off all electricity to the place.

When television dishes became popular, the couple got one so they could watch television, something that hadn't been available in their remote location.

It worked really well, the wife said, except when a fish went over the wheel. That made a power bump, which caused the television dish to not only lose power but also its programming.

## Make your own fun

Phase II  
Mary Kay Woodyard



There is a joke about an elderly gentleman and a teenager sitting together during a football game. They began to talk and the young man said he couldn't imagine growing up when the older man did.

"What did you do all day? No TV, no internet, no cell phones or video games." After several minutes of listening to the young man's tirade, the elderly man said, "We invented those things."

There is no doubt the absence of video games and TV and few toys instilled in youngsters an ability to make their own fun.

This innovation later led to adults who knew how to dream, create and build. My favorite part of the Apollo 13 movie is when the astronauts are basically stranded in space and the NASA leader on the ground drops all this "stuff" on the table and says "...bring them (the

Astronauts) home." And they did.

These men and some women were able to do this because they knew how to tinker with what they had available. Do the playtime activities of today's youth encourage the same abilities?

Given tape, paper, and an egg carton can they entertain themselves for several hours? I have grandchildren who can make a light saber from paper towel tubes and with their imaginations they are as elaborate as any one might buy.

There are other children who see it as

Eventually, the very wealthy owners decided to pay to have the place connected to the lines, which were about 17 miles down the winding dirt road.

After underground lines were put in so as not to disturb the scenery, it was discovered that most of the buildings had no light switches. They had never needed them, since the electricity was all turned off at the same time every night.

I'm sure my friends won't have that problem, but they might find that heating with propane or wood to be a lot of work.

I never had to live off the grid, but I did live in a home heated by wood. Getting up at 2 a.m. to refill the stove was a winter ritual when the temperatures fell to between -20 and -40.

And my friends in Colorado wonder why I moved to Kansas! We have natural gas.

"Hey Steve, turn that thermostat up, will you?"

a paper towel tube and cannot see it as anything else. Even Legos has answered the call to limited vision by selling a specific idea.

One of the greatest things about our history is our ability to dream and create. The children of today I see who have this same ability have limited access to video games and TV.

It isn't that the technology is bad it is that it becomes a babysitter and the balance is lost. It isn't that children have lost the ability to dream, it is that parents want to provide the most up to date toys. With Christmas fast approaching I hope the number one item on the Christmas list isn't the most popular or expensive toy but the one which will instill a sense of self worth. It takes a little more time and teaching from the parent, but isn't that what parenting really is?